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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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CANADIAN PARKLANDS DUCK PRODUCTION OFFSETS PRAIRIE LOSSES; BANDING ON SCHEDULE

In spite of the late nesting season the cooperative banding crews in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have trapped and banded as many ducks this year as for an equal period last year, according to John L. Farley, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The banding work is being done concurrently with the production survey of the waterfowl nesting grounds. Final survey estimates on the results of the 1956 breeding season will be compiled at the end of July and will be used in setting the 1956 waterfowl hunting regulations.

Reports from the Canadian provinces indicate that late spring and early summer droughts on grassland prairies reduced somewhat the production of young waterfowl there but that the wooded parklands are in excellent condition. In view of the large number of birds which nested in the parklands this year, gains in this region may offset reductions elsewhere. Summer hail in some areas is still a factor to be considered however.

The best banding success has been realized by the drive-banding crews operating in central and western Saskatchewan and satisfactory progress is being made in Alberta. The crews which are using dogs for locating the central Saskatchewan mallards, or "upland game ducks", so named because of the tendency of the young to leave the water and scurry to cover in the brush, also report that they are catching fair numbers of birds. Banding crews in Manitoba have found that because of the lateness of the season many of the ducklings they catch are too young to band.

This second part of the survey - the aerial count of broods--has been hampered by inclement flying weather but the crews are pushing to meet the July 25 deadline set for the completion of the nesting survey.

The annual summer waterfowl survey, which is carried on cooperatively by the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Canadian Wildlife Service and many American states and Canadian provinces as well as some private organizations, is conducted in two parts. The first segment, an aerial count of the breeding population, was scheduled to begin May 1, but bad weather delayed this activity for as long as two weeks in some parts of the Canadian provinces. This portion of the survey takes about 30 days. The second part, the production count, takes most of the month of July.

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